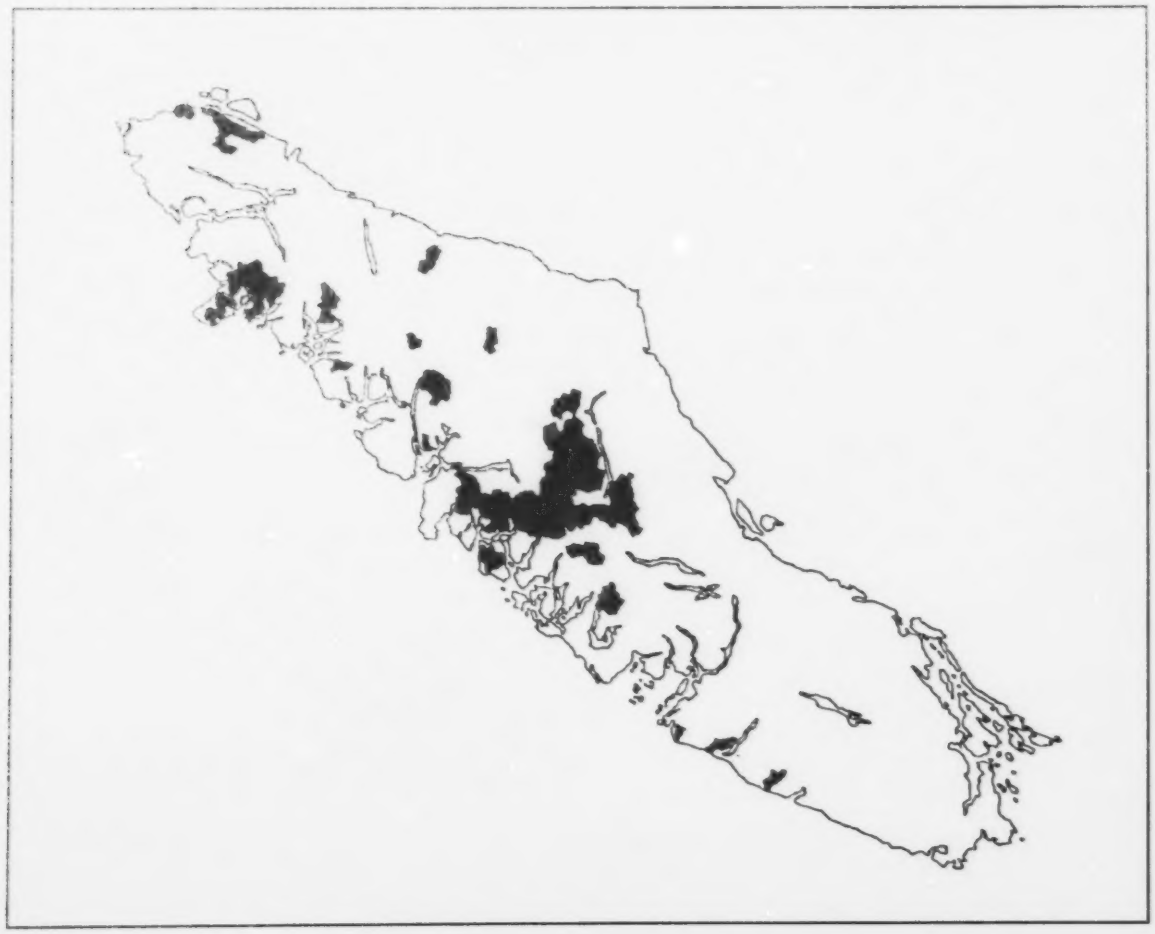
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Undeveloped Watersheds on Vancouver Island Larger Than 1000 Hectares

1990



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Ministry
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Recreation Branch
Technical Report
1992:3

Undeveloped Watersheds on Vancouver Island Larger Than 1000 Hectares

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John F. Wilkinson

Recreation Branch
Ministry of Forests

Foreword

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the status of undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island, as of 1990, to assist in land use and protected area planning.

This report was initially prepared in August 1990 as a working document for the British Columbia Forest Service. Numerous requests for copies have been received because of growing interest in the status of undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island.

The *Commission on Resources and Environment* is currently developing a regional land use planning process for the province, beginning with Vancouver Island. The commission will be recommending to government areas for protected area status.

In concert with the commission, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Ministry of Forests (1992) have identified areas to be studied for possible park or wilderness status. Fourteen undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 ha are located within approved park and wilderness study areas. A timetable for studies as well as the approximate size and location of study areas is described in the map brochure *Towards a Protected Areas Strategy for B.C.* (available from Recreation Branch or BC Parks).

Because of the interest in undeveloped watersheds, Recreation Branch has published this technical report to make it available to a wider audience.

Further information on undeveloped watersheds in B.C., including a 1:2,000,000 scale map, is available in the Recreation Branch report *An Inventory of Undeveloped Watersheds in B.C.*, Technical Report 1992:2.

The Summary section highlights the major findings of this report.

Section 1.0 provides background information and discusses the purpose and value of this inventory.

Section 2.0 explains terms and definitions, and Section 3.0 describes methodology and Section 4.0 gives a general overview of the information contained in the tables.

In Section 5.0 tables 1 through 8 are devoted to the classification of identified watersheds according to aspect of drainage, size, watershed category and development schedule.

The accompanying 1:500,000 scale map insert, found at the back of this report, shows the location and approximate boundaries of the undeveloped watersheds.

Recreation Branch will update this inventory as time and resources permit.

Comments on this report, including any errors or omissions, can be submitted in writing to:

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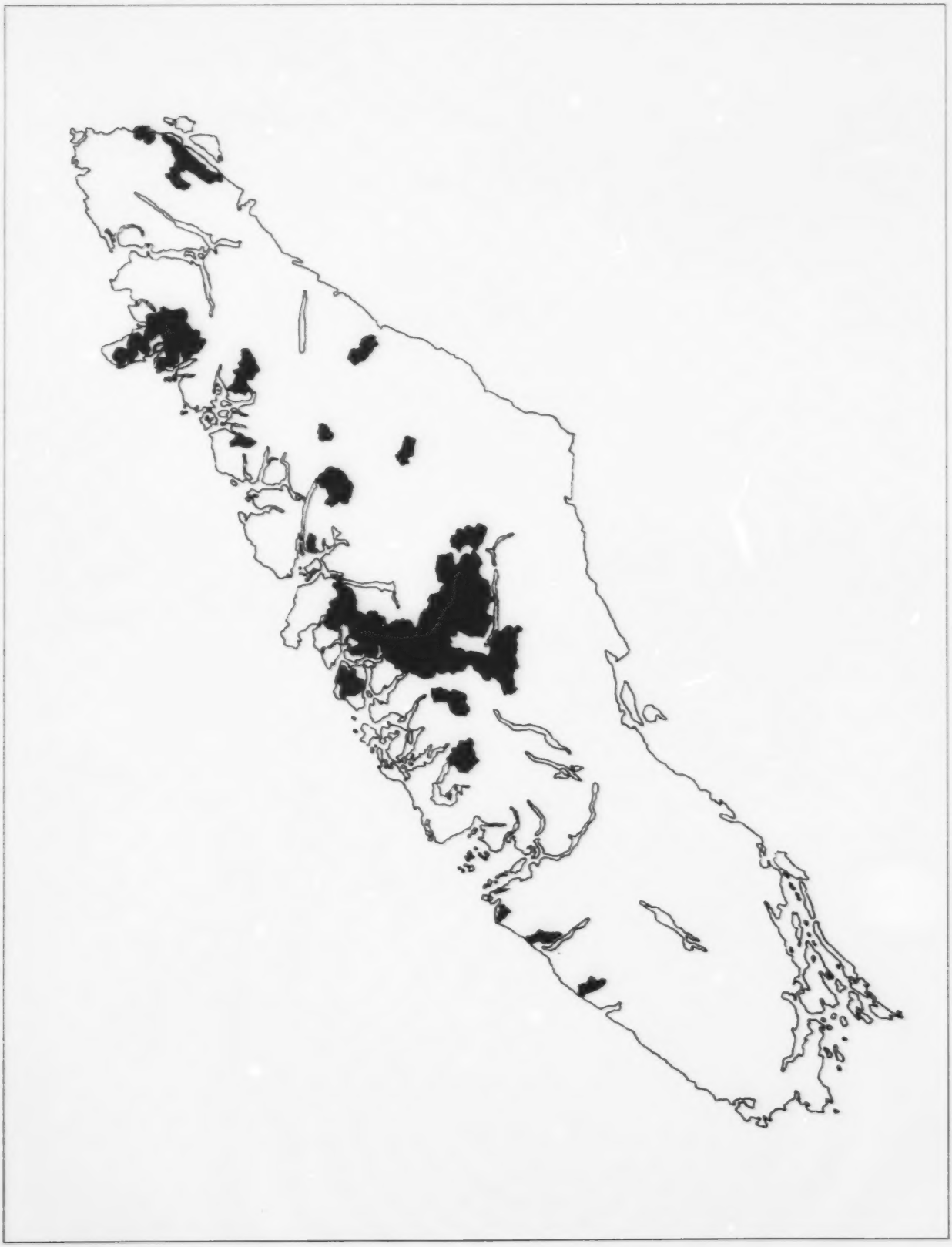
Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island



Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

Summary

This section summarizes the important findings of an inventory of undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 hectares, as of 1990.

Number and size

- There are 58 remaining undeveloped watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on Vancouver Island:
  - 39 are between 1,000 and 5,000 hectares.
  - 18 are between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares.
  - 1, the Megin River watershed, is larger than 20,000 hectares.

Degree of development[1]

- Plans for the 58 remaining undeveloped watersheds are as follows:
  - 37 are scheduled for development.
    - 17 are scheduled for development within 5 years.
    - 20 are scheduled for development within 5 to 20 years.
  - 21 are protected from development by their land status (e.g. park or recreation area).
    - 12 of these are in Strathcona Park.

Drainage aspect
West coast watersheds:

- 38 of the 58 remaining undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 hectares are western drainages.
- Of the 146 primary watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on the west coast of Vancouver Island, 25 remain undeveloped.

East coast watersheds:

- 20 of the 58 remaining undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 hectares are eastern drainages.
- Of the 53 primary watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on the east coast of Vancouver Island, 4 remain undeveloped.
- There are no primary watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on the east coast of Vancouver Island that are protected from development.

[1] 14 of the 37 undeveloped and unprotected watersheds occur within approved park and wilderness study areas identified in *Towards a Protected Areas Strategy for B.C.*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Ministry of Forests, 1992.

1.0 Introduction

Recent resource use conflicts in British Columbia have resulted in increasing public attention being focused on the declining number of undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island. There is concern that as the remaining undeveloped watersheds are roaded and logged, a legacy of unique biological diversity may be lost forever.

In light of this concern, the Recreation Branch (then the Recreation Section, Integrated Resources Branch) initiated a project to identify the remaining undeveloped watersheds in all of British Columbia. This project consists of two stages: first, an examination of Vancouver Island watersheds over 1,000 hectares, followed by an examination of mainland watersheds over 5,000 hectares. This report presents the results of the first stage of the project. The second stage is presented in the Recreation Branch technical report *An Inventory of Undeveloped Watersheds in British Columbia.*

The purpose of both reports is to provide information on the status of B.C.'s undeveloped watersheds to assist in land use and protected area planning.

At the centre of this report is Table 1: *A Summary List of Undeveloped Watersheds on Vancouver Island Larger Than 1,000 Hectares.* It identifies the watersheds either by name, or map co-ordinates if unnamed, indicates watershed category, area, land status and development schedule, as of 1990. The summary list begins with the most southern watershed on the west coast and proceeds in a clockwise fashion around the island, terminating with the most southern watershed on the east coast. A map has been produced by the Timber Harvesting Branch that provides a visual representation of this summary list. It accompanies this report.

This first stage of the project also included an examination of watersheds on Meares, Flores, Nootka, Hope and Nigei Islands. The qualifying watersheds on these islands are listed under the subtitle "Ancillary Islands".

It is hoped the reader of this report will give careful consideration to Section 2.0: Terms and Definitions, particularly the definition of the terms 'watershed' and 'undeveloped watershed'.

Inventory Branch has recently produced a similar report[1] for watersheds larger than 5,000 hectares. Keith Moore, a private consultant, is presently revising an earlier draft report which included Vancouver Island watersheds[2].

2.0 Terms and Definitions

2.1 Watershed

Watersheds are defined in this report as follows:

Watershed: a drainage area whose boundary is defined by a height of land upstream and a significant hydrological feature downstream.

2.2 Watershed Categories

This report divides watersheds into three distinct categories: primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary: all the land area draining into a stream system which has its terminus in salt water. It is a complete drainage area from saltwater to height of land including all tributary (secondary and tertiary) drainage areas.

Secondary: a drainage system from headwaters to its confluence with a primary stream, or lake associated with a primary stream, including all tributary (tertiary) drainage systems which enter the secondary watershed.

Tertiary: a drainage system from headwaters to its confluence with a secondary stream, or lake associated with a secondary stream, including all drainage systems which enter the tertiary watershed.

2.3 Degree of Development

Watersheds are divided into two categories of development in this report, defined as follows:

Undeveloped watershed: a watershed in which no more than two per cent of the area has been disturbed by human activity. This includes developments such as logging, powerlines, pipelines, mines or roads. Disease or pest damage, blowdown and fires do not constitute development.

Fragmented watershed: the undeveloped headwaters of otherwise developed watersheds. They must be delineated by natural features such as a lake or stream confluence.

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[1] *Alphabetical List of Major Unlogged Watersheds on Vancouver Island*, prepared by B. M. Hall and J. F. McLellan, Inventory Branch, Ministry of Forests, Victoria, June 12, 1990.

[2] *A Preliminary Assessment of the Status of Temperate Rainforests in British Columbia*, Conservation International by Keith Moore, February 1990.

Fragmented watersheds referred to in this report represent undeveloped portions of significantly developed primary or secondary watersheds which can be delineated by natural features such as a lake or a stream confluence.

2.4 Land Status

Indicates land ownership and management authority (e.g., Crown provincial forest or provincial park). In the case of land within the provincial forest, Timber Supply Area (TSA) or Tree Farm Licence (TFL) areas are noted. Where the land within a watershed is divided between two land status types, the type covering the largest area is stated first.

2.5 Development Schedule

The development schedule indicates, in very broad terms, when resource development is expected to commence within a watershed as of 1990.

Virtually all watersheds charted for development within the next 5 years are also the subject of on-going planning processes that will determine if and when development is to take place (i.e., Commission on Resources and Environment, Clayoquot Sound Sustainable Development Task Force). Therefore, no attempt has been made to be more precise than the 5 year time frame.

A number of watersheds have also been approved for study as potential parks or wilderness areas through a provincial protected areas strategy (*Towards a Protected Areas Strategy*, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and Ministry of Forests, 1992).

2.6 Drainage Aspect

Watersheds are divided in this report into two categories by general drainage direction:

West coast watersheds: those watersheds that lie west of the crest line along the highest point of land running from Race Rocks in the south to Cape Scott in the north.

East coast watersheds: those that lie east of this crest line.

2.7 Size Classification

Watersheds are divided into three size classes in this report: 1,000-4,999 hectares, 5,000-19,999 hectares and 20,000 hectares or greater.

3.0 Methodology

This inventory is based on Landsat Imagery and reliability is considered to be very high.

3.1 Boundary Determination

Watershed boundaries were determined by following the height of land surrounding a drainage system using 1:50,000 scale topographic maps.

3.2 Area Determination

Watershed areas were determined by digitizing directly from boundaries drawn on 1:50,000 scale topographic maps. The accuracy of the area calculations is therefore qualified by the accuracy of determining watershed boundaries using only topographic maps.

4.0 Discussion

This section and Figure 1 highlight the findings of an inventory of undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 ha as of 1990.

Number and size

- There are 58 remaining undeveloped watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on Vancouver Island.
  - 39 are between 1,000 and 5,000 hectares
  - 18 are between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares
  - 1, the Megin River watershed[4] is larger than 20,000 hectares.

Degree of development

- Of the 58 remaining undeveloped watersheds:
  - 31 are primary (2 are fragmented)
  - 20 are secondary (5 are fragmented)
  - 7 are tertiary watersheds (none fragmented).

- Out of the 58 total:
  - 17 are scheduled for development within 5 years.
  - 20 are scheduled for development within 5 to 20 years.
  - 21 are protected from development by their land status (e.g. park/recreation area).

Drainage Aspect
West coast watersheds

- 38 of the remaining 58 undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 hectares are western drainages:
  - 26 are between 1,000 and 5,000 hectares.
  - 11 are between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares.
  - 1 is larger than 20,000 hectares.

Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

- Undeveloped west coast watersheds are scheduled for development as follows:
  - 11 are scheduled for development within 5 years.
  - 18 are scheduled for development with 5 to 20 years.
  - 9 are protected from development.

- There are approximately 146 primary watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on the west coast of Vancouver Island[1].
  - 121 are developed
  - 25 are undeveloped
    - of these 9 are scheduled for development within 5 years,
    - 10 are scheduled for development within 5 to 20 years.
    - 6 are protected from development.

East coast watersheds:

- Twenty of the remaining undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island larger than 1,000 hectares are eastern drainages:
  - 13 are between 1,000 and 5,000 hectares.
  - 7 are between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares.
  - none are larger than 20,000 hectares.

- Undeveloped east coast watersheds are scheduled for development as follows:
  - 6 are scheduled for development within 5 years.
  - 2 are scheduled for development within 5 to 20 years.
  - 12 are protected from development (all of which lie within Strathcona Park).

- There are approximately 53 primary watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on the east coast of Vancouver Island[1]:
  - 49 are developed.
  - 4 remain undeveloped
    - 2 of these are scheduled for development within the next 5 years.
    - 2 are scheduled for development within 5 to 20 years.

- There are no primary watersheds larger than 1,000 hectares on the east coast of Vancouver Island that are protected from development.

Figure 1: Vancouver Island Watersheds

	1,000 - 5,000 ha	5,000 + ha (# of Watersheds)	Total
Primary (to tide water)			
West coast			
Developed	67	54	121
Undeveloped, not protected	13	6	19
Undeveloped, protected	5	1	6
East coast			
Developed	20	29	49
Undeveloped, not protected	3	1	4
Undeveloped, protected	0	0	0
Secondary and other			
West coast			
Undeveloped, not protected	7	3	10
Undeveloped, protected	1	2	3
East coast			
Undeveloped, not protected	4	0	4
Undeveloped, protected	6	6	12

Developed - more than 2% human disturbance in watershed.
Undeveloped - less than 2% human disturbance in watershed.
Protected - entire watershed in protected area.
Not protected - entire watershed not in protected area.

[1] The number of primary watersheds was determined by combining Keith Moore's calculation of watersheds larger than 5,000 hectares with an examination of 1:50,000 scale maps for watersheds smaller than 5,000 hectares. This examination included the 5 islands mentioned in Section 2.0

5.0 Tables of Results

Table 1: A Summary List of Undeveloped Watersheds on Vancouver Island Larger Than 1,000 Hectares

#	NAME	CATEGORY	AREA	LAND STATUS	DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE
VANCOUVER ISLAND					
1	Cullite Creek	primary	1340 ha	TFL 46/Pacific Rim National Park	within 5 years
2	Logan Creek	primary	1314 ha	TFL 46/Pacific Rim National Park	within 5 years
3	Tsusiat River	primary	2777 ha	Pacific Rim National Park/Indian Reserve	protected
4	Clayoquot River	secondary	6998 ha	TFL 44	within 5 years
5	Ursus Creek	secondary	6567 ha	TFL 44	5 - 20 years
6	Moyeha River	primary	16885 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
7	Watta/Shelter Creek	primary	3467 ha	TFL 44/Strathcona Park/Indian Reserve	5 - 20 years
8	Megin River	primary	21713 ha	TFL 44/Strathcona Park/Indian Reserve	5 - 20 years
9	unnamed 49°26'/126°10'	primary	1573 ha	TFL 46/Arrowsmith TSA	5 - 20 years
10	unnamed 49°29'/126°13'	primary	3427 ha	TFL 46/Arrowsmith TSA	5 - 20 years
11	Sydney River	primary	5299 ha	TFL 44/TFL 46/Indian Reserve	within 5 years
12	Satchie Creek	secondary	1850 ha	TFL 46/Arrowsmith TSA	5 - 20 years
13	unnamed 49°32'/126°21'	secondary	1374 ha	TFL 46/Arrowsmith TSA	5 - 20 years
14	Silverado Creek	primary	2361 ha	TFL 19/Strathcona TSA	within 5 years
15	Bancroft Creek	secondary	5452 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
16	upper Burman River (above Bancroft Creek)	fragmented primary	10453 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
17	unnamed 49°40'/126°3'	primary	1062 ha	TFL 19 / Pacific Rim National Park	5 - 20 years
18	upper Ucona River (above Donner Lake)	fragmented secondary	2339 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
19	Hoiss Creek	primary	1133 ha	TFL 19/Indian Reserve	within 5 years
20	upper Perry River (above Perry Lake)	fragmented secondary	2011 ha	TFL 19	5 - 20 years
21	upper Leiner River (above Perry River)	fragmented primary	5756 ha	TFL 19	5 - 20 years
22	McKelvie Creek	secondary	2033 ha	TFL 19/Tahsis village	5 - 20 years
23	unnamed 50°5'/127°42'	tertiary	1810 ha	TFL 19	5 - 20 years
24	Narrowgut Creek	primary	2351 ha	Strathcona TSA	within 5 years
25	Kwois Creek	secondary	3987 ha	Strathcona TSA	5 - 20 years
26	Silburn Creek	secondary	3525 ha	Strathcona TSA	within 5 years
27	Power River	primary	5969 ha	Strathcona TSA/Indian Reserve	within 5 years
28	Battle Bay Creek	primary	3080 ha	Strathcona TSA	5 - 20 years
29	Nasparti River	primary	5267 ha	Strathcona TSA	5 - 20 years
30	unnamed 50°10'/127°42'	primary	1022 ha	Brooks Peninsula Recreation Area	protected
31	unnamed 50°8'/127°46'	primary	1223 ha	Brooks Peninsula Recreation Area	protected
32	Amos Creek	primary	2167 ha	Brooks Peninsula Recreation Area	protected
33	unnamed 50°11/127°46'	primary	2393 ha	Brooks Peninsula Recreation Area	protected
34	East Creek	primary	4569 ha	Kingcome TSA	within 5 years
35	Klaskish River	primary	4814 ha	Kingcome TSA	within 5 years
36	Irony Creek	primary	2325 ha	Kingcome TSA	5 - 20 years
37	Pugh Creek	secondary	2415 ha	Kingcome TSA	within 5 years
38	Skinner Creek	primary	1294 ha	Kingcome TSA	5 - 20 years
39	Shushartie River	primary	7243 ha	Kingcome TSA/private	within 5 years
40	unnamed 50°47'/127°40'	primary	1014 ha	Kingcome TSA	within 5 years
41	Catherine Creek	secondary	4543 ha	TFL 39	within 5 years
42	Schoen Creek	tertiary	3291 ha	Schoen Lake Park/TFL 37	within 5 years
43	Tlools Creek	tertiary	4905 ha	Strathcona Park/private	within 5 years
44	Idsardi Creek	tertiary	1714 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
45	upper Elk River (above Drum Lake)	fragmented secondary	5485 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
46	Cervus Creek	tertiary	5083 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
47	Filberg Creek	tertiary	1444 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
48	Wolf River	secondary	14791 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
49	Marblerock Creek	secondary	1492 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
50	Phillips Creek	secondary	7270 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
51	upper Thelwood Creek (above Price Creek)	fragmented secondary	3834 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
52	Price Creek	tertiary	2214 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
53	Henshaw Creek	secondary	3713 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
54	Ralph River/Shepard Creek	secondary	7855 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
55	upper Ash River (above Oshinow Lake)	fragmented secondary	5208 ha	Strathcona Park	protected
ANCILLARY ISLANDS					
56	unnamed 49°20'/126°7'	primary	1530 ha	TFL 44	5 - 20 years
57	Cow Creek	primary	1389 ha	TFL 44/Arrowsmith TSA	5 - 20 years
58	unnamed 49°20'/126°12'	primary	3100 ha	TFL 44/Arrowsmith TSA/Indian Reserve	5 - 20 years

Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

Table 2: Undeveloped Watersheds of Vancouver Island by Aspect of Drainage and Size Class

West Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha
Cullite Creek
Logan Creek
Tsusiat River
Watta/Shelter Creek
unnamed #9
unnamed #10
Satchie Creek
unnamed #13
Silverado Creek
unnamed #17
upper Ucona River
Hoiss Creek
upper Perry River
McKelvie Creek
unnamed #23
Narrowgut Creek
Kwois Creek
Silburn Creek
Battle Bay Creek
unnamed #30
unnamed #31
Amos Creek
unnamed #33
unnamed #55
Cow Creek
unnamed #57

West Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha
Clayoquot River
Ursus Creek
Moyeha River
Sydney River
Bancroft Creek
upper Burman River
upper Leiner River
Power River
Nasparti River
East Creek
Klaskish River

West Coast: 20,000 ha or greater
Megin River

East Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha
Irony Creek
Pugh Creek
Skinner Creek
unnamed #40
Catherine Creek
Schoen Creek
Tlools Creek
Idsardi Creek
Filberg Creek
Marblerock Creek
upper Thelwood Creek
Price Creek
Henshaw Creek

East Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha
Shushartie River
upper Elk River
Cervus Creek
Wolf River
Philips Creek
Ralph River/Shepard Creek
upper Ash River

East Coast: 20,000 ha or greater
none

Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

Table 3: Undeveloped Primary Watersheds of Vancouver Island *

West Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha	East Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha
Cullite Creek	Irony Creek
Logan Creek	Skinner Creek
Tsusiat River	unnamed #40
Watta/Shelter Creek	
unnamed #9	
unnamed #10	
Silverado Creek	
unnamed #17	
Hoiss Creek	
Narrowgut Creek	
Battle Bay Creek	
unnamed #30	
unnamed #31	
Amos Creek	
unnamed #33	
unnamed #55	
Cow Creek	
unnamed #57	
West Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha	**East Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha**
Moyeha River	Shushartie River
Sydney River	
Power River	
Nasparti River	
East Creek	
Klaskish River	
West Coast: 20,000 ha or greater	**East Coast: 20,000 ha or greater**
Megin River	none

* fragmented primary watersheds not included

Table 4: Undeveloped Secondary Watersheds of Vancouver Island *

West Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha	East Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha
Satchie Creek	Pugh Creek
unnamed #13	Catherine Creek
McKelvie Creek	Marblerock Creek
Kwois Creek	Henshaw Creek
Silburn Creek	
West Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha	**East Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha**
Clayoquot River	Wolf River
Ursus Creek	Philips Creek
Bancroft Creek	Ralph River/Shepard Creek
West Coast: 20,000 ha or greater	**East Coast: 20,000 ha or greater**
none	none

* fragmented secondary watersheds not included

Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

Table 5: Undeveloped Tertiary Watersheds of Vancouver Island

West Coast	East Coast
1,000-4,999 ha	**1,000-4,999 ha**
unnamed #23	Schoen Creek
	Tlools Creek
	Idsardi Creek
	Filberg Creek
	Price Creek
5,000-19,999 ha	**5,000-19,999 ha**
none	Cervus Creek
20,000 ha or greater	**20,000 ha or greater**
none	none

Table 6: Undeveloped Vancouver Island Watersheds Scheduled for Development Within 5 Years

West Coast	East Coast
1,000-4,999 ha	**1,000-4,999 ha**
Cullite Creek[1]	Pugh Creek
Logan Creek[1]	unnamed #40
Silverado Creek	Catherine Creek
Hoiss Creek	Schoen Creek[1]
Narrowgut Creek	Tlools Creek[1]
Silburn Creek	
5,000-19,999 ha	**5,000-19,999 ha**
Clayoquot River	Shushartie River
Sydney River	
Power River	
East Creek	
Klaskish River	
20,000 ha or greater	**20,000 ha or greater**
none	none

[1] part of watershed is protected by existing land status (see watershed description in Section 2.0)

Undeveloped watersheds on Vancouver Island

Table 7: Undeveloped Vancouver Island Watersheds Scheduled for Development Within 5-20 Years

West Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha	East Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha
Watta/Shelter Creek[1]	Irony Creek
unnamed #9	Skinner Creek
unnamed #10	
Satchie Creek	
unnamed #13	
unnamed #17	
upper Perry River	
McKelvie Creek	
unnamed #23	
Kwois Creek	
Battle Bay Creek	
unnamed #55	
Cow Creek	
unnamed #57	
West Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha	**East Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha**
Ursus Creek	none
upper Leiner River	
Nasparti River	
West Coast: 20,000 ha or greater	**East Coast: 20,000 ha or greater**
Megin River[1]	none

[1] part of watershed is protected by existing land status (see watershed description in Section 2.0)

Table 8: Undeveloped Vancouver Island Watersheds Protected From Development

West Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha	East Coast: 1,000-4,999 ha
Tsusiat River	Idsardi Creek
upper Ucona River	Filberg Creek
unnamed #301	Marblerock Creek
unnamed #31	upper Thelwood Creek
Amos Creek	Price Creek
unnamed #33	Henshaw Creek
West Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha	**East Coast: 5,000-19,999 ha**
Moyeha River	upper Elk River
Bancroft Creek	Cervus Creek
upper Burman River	Wolf River
	Philips Creek
	Ralph River/Shepard Creek
	upper Ash River
West Coast: 20,000 ha or greater	**East Coast: 20,000 ha or greater**
none	none